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ABSTRACT

Some reflections on the future of educational research are offered as responses to questions derived from an article by Ian Stronach ("Research Intelligence," n61 p3 1997). The first is the question of what the future holds for the philosophy and methodology of educational inquiry. A response to this question must recognize the importance of the politics of educational knowledge. There will be inevitable disagreements between educational researchers, but it should be possible to integrate educational activism within educational research. Another question is whether new relations between the local and the global, if such are implied by the conditions of postmodernity, imply new rationales. It is suggested that new rationales between the local and the global can be created from the ground of educational relationships between teachers and their students and from educational inquiries about how to improve practice. It is necessary to hearing how living teachers, students, and researchers are creating their own living educational theories as they work at living their values more fully in their practice. Another question is whether new technologies imply the possibility of recasting the focus, tempo, or interactivity of research approaches. The new technologies are already transforming the conduct and presentation of educational research and its interactivity. Collaboration among researchers has been facilitated by e-mail and the Internet. A final question is whether political changes in the ways in which we are governed open up or close down new possibilities for educational research. This question is discussed in the context of: (1) funding; (2) university power relations, creative tension, and original research; and (3) the influences of journal editors and research committees. Individuals who are creating their own living theories are postparadigmatic in the sense that they are creating theories of their singularities in their social contexts. They are often doing this within contexts that support paradigmatic views of educational knowledge. (Contains 35 references.) (SLD)

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Creating Living Educational Theories Through Paradigmatic and Post-paradigmatic Possibilities

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Jack Whitehead

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Creating living educational theories through paradigmatic and post-paradigmatic possibilities.

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A paper for presentation to the BERA Symposium:
'Futuring educational research: what are the paradigmatic or post-paradigmatic possibilities?,
Session 39.38 at AERA, San Diego, 13-17 April 1998.

Educational research is sometimes portrayed in terms of paradigms, or in terms of a succession of 'generations' (Guba and Lincoln 1989). So far, we seem to have counted up to four or five, although not without controversy and a sense of finality that keeps receding into the future. What does the future hold for the philosophy and methodology of educational inquiry? Do new relations between the local and the global, if such are implied by the conditions of 'postmodernity', imply new rationales? Do new technologies imply the possibility of recasting the focus, tempo or interactivity of research approaches? Do political changes in the ways in which we are governed open up or close down new possibilities for educational research? These - and many other questions - may be raised about the new possibilities of new contexts and new practices for educational inquiry. (Ian Stronach, 1997, Research Intelligence , No. 61. p.3)

Here are my responses to these questions:

What does the future hold for the philosophy and methodology of educational inquiry?

Because of the range of philosophies and methodologies of educational inquiries I am always wary of questions which are formed in terms of 'the' philosophy or 'the' methodology of educational inquiry. As a dialectician (Plato) I do like to hold both the 'One and the Many' together. Hence, in answering the question I do want to acknowledge the plurality of philosophies and methodologies of educational inquiries whilst acknowledging that I do hold a philosophy and a methodology which has emerged in relation to other philosophies and methodologies.

Let me explain what I mean in term of changes in my philosophy and methodology between 1970 and 1998. In 1970 I passed an examination for an Academic Diploma in the Philosophy and Psychology of Education at London University. In my answers to questions on philosophy and methodology in educational research, I was clear that I held the position set out by Richard Peters and Paul Hirst (1970) . Educational Theory was constituted by the disciplines of education and different forms of knowledge were distinguished by their conceptual frameworks and methods of validation. Following Peters (1966), in his Ethics and Education, I accepted a Kantian form of transcendental deduction for the justification of ethical principles. I believed that educational inquiries of the kind, 'what ought I do to?' or 'How do I improve my practice?', had to be broken down into separate components, which could be understood in terms of the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education, and then reintegrated back into the solution of the educational problem.

My philosophy and methodology changed in 1971 as I questioned the validity of the explanations offered by the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education for my educational influence with my pupils. The transformation of my philosophy and methodology of educational inquiry was helped by Michael Polanyi's (1958) Personal Knowledge where he wrote about stripping away the crippling mutilations of centuries of objectivist thought and about the importance of a decision to understand the world from one's own point of view as an individual claiming originality and exercising one's judgement with universal intent. Over the next decade the changes in my philosophy and methodology could be understood in terms of Mitroff and Kilman's (1978) classification of social science methodologies as I moved through the philosophies and methodologies of an analytic scientist, a conceptual theorist, a conceptual humanist and a particular humanist into the creation of a distinctively 'educational' philosophy and methodology.

My break with the idea that my educational inquiries could be classified in terms of social science came

when I analysed my educational development as I moved through these philosophies and methodologies. I began to address the question of whether or not I could develop a distinctively educational philosophy and methodology which could not be reduced to any conceptual framework or methods of validation from the disciplines of education, taken separately or in any combination. By 1980 I had developed such a philosophy and methodology as I asked, answered and researched questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?', and 'How do I help you to improve your learning?' and 'How do I live my values more fully in my practice?'.

At the heart of my philosophy was the existence of my 'I' as a living contradiction in claims to educational knowledge and educational theory. My conviction about the importance of including 'I' as a living contradiction in such claims came from viewing video-tapes of my own classroom practice. As I worked with other teachers (Whitehead 1976) on improving the quality of pupils learning in science lessons, we discussed the tensions we felt as we could see ourselves influencing our students in ways which contradicted our previous perceptions of such influences. The inclusion of contradictory statements in theories had been criticised by Popper (1963) in his attack on dialectics, on the grounds that theories which contained contradictions were based on nothing better than a loose and woolly way of speaking.

I coined the phrase living educational theories to distinguish the new form of educational knowledge from solely propositional claims to knowledge and began to explore the development of dialogical and dialectical forms of representation for such living theories. I also began to explore with my research students the nature of the new living standards of judgement in the form of living values, for testing the validity of such claims to educational knowledge. I have already presented to the conference (Whitehead 1998) a more detailed analysis of the processes of creating living theories.

The following 'living theory' accounts with their new standards of judgement, may be accessed from the World Wide Web at address http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw

Eames, K. (1995) *How do I, as a teacher and an educational action-researcher, describe and explain the nature of my professional knowledge?* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath.
Evans, M. (1995) *An action research inquiry into reflection in action as part of my role as a deputy headteacher.* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kingston.
Holley, E. (1997) *How do I as a teacher researcher contribute to the development of living educational theory through an exploration of my values in my professional practice?* M.Phil. Theses, University of Bath.
Hughes, J. (1996) Action Planning and Assessment in Guidance Contexts: *How can I understand and support these processes?* Ph.D Thesis, University of Bath.
Laidlaw, M. (1996) *How can I create my own living educational theory through accounting to you for my own educational development?* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath.
Shobbrook, H. (1997) *My Living Educational Theory Grounded In My Life: How can I enable my communication through correspondence to be seen as educational and worthy of presentation in its original form.*? M.A. dissertation, University of Bath.

In answering the question, *'what does the future hold for the philosophy and methodology of educational inquiry?',* I recognise the importance of the politics of educational knowledge. I am thinking of politics in terms of the kind of power relations which could force Galileo to recant his findings that the earth revolved around the sun. I see similar kinds of power relations at work in educational research, in the process described as 'balkanisation' by Robert Donmoyer (1996). Balkanisation refers to the process in which different interest groups exclude different forms of discourse to their own, with little or no attempt to engage in creative, educational dialogues.

I will respond as a dialectician to both Stronach's title, *'Futuring educational research: what are the paradigmatic or post-paradigmatic possibilities?,* (my emphasis) and to Rorty's (1989):

i) (Solidarity) *is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers. Solidarity is not discovered by reflection but created. It is created by*

increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other, unfamiliar sorts of people. (my emphasis)

ii) *'.. the novel, the movie and the TV program have, gradually but steadily, replaced the sermon and the treatise as the principal vehicle or moral change and progress..... In my liberal utopia, this replacement would receive a kind of recognition which is still lacks. That recognition would be part of a general turn* ***against*** *theory and toward narrative.'* (my emphasis)

Both Stronach and Rorty appear to set up opposites in their language and ask for either/or choices to be made. In my philosophy and methodology of educational inquiry I embrace both paradigmatic and post-paradigmatic possibilities. In my move from the disciplines approach to a living theory approach I engaged in the deconstruction of one approach into a post-paradigmatic phase before helping to form a new paradigmatic phase of educational theory in the creation of living theories.

I try to show how solidarity is a matter of both critical reflection and creativity and that living educational theories related to improving education involve both narrative and theory. They do this by including in the narrative a description and explanation for the professional learning of the individual practitioner as they engage in asking, answering and researching questions of the kind, 'how do I improve what I am doing?'.

In his discussion of the stories educational researchers tell about themselves, Smith (1997) says that our disagreements are not empirical or, better said, they cannot be resolved empirically.

"While our disagreements may be philosophical, at least in one sense, there is little reason to hold out hope for a philosophical solution of the better argument. In the end, the disagreements reside in the different vocabularies that are being used to tell different stories to ourselves and to others about research and about who we are as educational researchers." (Smith 1997, p 10.)

The kind of disagreements which may characterise our future as educational researchers may be seen in the differences between Habermas and Rorty on universalism:

"Habermas thinks it essential to a democratic society that its self-image embody the universalism, and some form of the rationalism, of the Enlightenment. He thinks of his account of 'communicative reason' as a way of updating rationalism. I want not to update either universalism or rationalism but to dissolve both and replace them with something else." (Rorty 1989, p. 67)

Rorty says that he wants to replace the idea of 'universal validity' with a story of increasing willingness to live with plurality and to stop asking for universal validity:

"I want to see freely arrived at agreement as agreement on how to accomplish common purposes (e.g., prediction and control of the behaviour of atoms or people, equalising life-chances, decreasing cruelty), but I want to see these common purposes against the background of an increasing sense of the radical diversity of private purposes, of the radically poetic character of individual lives, and of the merely poetic foundations of the 'we-consciousness' which lies behind our social institutions." (Rorty 1989, pp. 67-68)

How such disagreements between researchers can be considered, without leading to a process of 'Balkanisation', has been a focus of discussions on the future of educational research between former Presidents of AERA in Educational Researcher (June/July 1997) on: *The Vision Thing: Educational Research and AERA in the 21st Century - Part 2 Competing Visions for Enhancing the Impact of Educational Research.* In considering what the future holds for the philosophies and methodologies of educational inquiries I want to secure a place for debate on the contribution of living educational theories.

David Berliner's (1997) contribution startled me with: "Looking back, I think AERA has failed to be an advocate for creating the conditions under which our knowledge could possibly affect the lives of

children" . If you read the 'living theory' theses and dissertations of Holley (1997), Laidlaw (1997), Evans (1995) and Eames (1995) (http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw), I think you will see how researchers can establish the conditions under which the creation of educational knowledge and theory can directly affect the lives of children. One of the key questions asked of these researchers is, 'What data will you gather to enable you to make a judgement on the effectiveness of your actions in helping your pupils' learning?'. I hope this form of research helps to show how educational activism can be integrated within educational research. However, when Berliner calls for educational activism in conjunction with other agencies to promote social justice I agree with Lauren Resnick (1997) and Nancy Cole (1997);

'the central reason for our failure as an activist or advocacy organisation is that we do not all agree on matters of policy and practice. We do come together in an organisation devoted to open-minded, rigorous research that bears on education'. (Resnick, p.15, 1997).

As an educational action research I do not agree that there is a fundamental difference between activism and research, between what makes action communities functional and what makes an educational action research community functional. But I do understand that there are other forms of educational research which hold to this separation. Hence, like Lauren Resnick and Nancy Cole, I value most highly our inclusive role in providing a space and an arena for informed and rational debate. One of the paradoxes in trying to create this future for paradigmatic and post-paradigmatic possibilities is that it will require committed action to create, protect and participate in the forums, such as AERA and BERA, which are devoted to open-minded, rigorous research that bears on education and the philosophies and methodologies of educational inquiries.

Do new relations between the local and the global, if such are implied by the conditions of 'postmodernity', imply new rationales?

In my determination to contribute to educational research, through creating educational knowledge and theory and in my insistence on distinguishing 'educational' from philosophy, psychology, sociology, history and management, I do not want to be seen to be excluding the later from what is 'educational'. In answer to a question about new relations between the local and the global I am drawn to Allan Luke's (1995) analysis of provisional politics in postmodern conditions:

"If modernist politics is conceived of as some kind of engagement with truth and the State, alternately heroic and tragic - provisional politics is about making it up as we go along, about shifting levels and subjects, about local effects of centralised edicts and policies, about pragmatic and contingent decisions, about getting our hands dirty, all the while committed to taking up issues of hybridity and marginality, economic exclusion and political disenfranchisement, but without clearcut, unambiguous normative benchmarks." (p.96)

Lukes acknowledges the shaping influence of Michael Apple's insistence on a political economy of educational knowledge and then demonstrates the different rationales between Apple's and his own response to the participation in the writing of competency scales:

".... if I had stuck with a simple political economy analysis, I wouldn't have taken on the job. We could have stayed in the safe haven of 'critique' and taken apart Labour's economic rationalist agenda from the sidelines, as many have. We felt that there was more at issue here, that what needed to be done was an ameliorative intervention on behalf of those whose lives would be most directly affected by this agenda, the unemployed, youth, women entering the workforce, the underemployed and marginal." (pp. 93-94)

I want to distinguish 'educational' knowledge from a political economy of educational knowledge for the same reason I distinguish educational theory from contributions to that theory from the disciplines of education. In my experience each discipline attempts to take hegemonic control over what is to count as 'educational'.

I want to suggest that new rationales between the local and global can be created from the ground of educational relationships between teachers and their students and from educational inquiries of the form, 'How do I improve my practice?', 'How can I help you to improve your learning?' and 'How can I live my values more fully in my practice?'. Evidence on the nature of these new rationales can be seen in detail in the Ph.D., M.Phil. and M.A. dissertations at the above World Wide Web address.

The six practitioner researchers listed above graduated with their Ph.D. , M.Phil. and M.A. degrees, for their educational action research studies, from the Universities of Bath and Kingston between June 96 and December 97. These 'Living Educational Theory', theses and dissertations do imply new rationales for educational research into singularities (Bassey 1995). They also explicate new, living standards of judgement for testing the validity of the explanations within practitioners' claims to educational knowledge. These new rationales are grounded in the life stories of educational action researchers who are engaged in self-study research into their educative relationships with their students. They ask, answer and research questions of the kind, 'How can I help you to improve your learning?'.

MacLure (1996) has pointed out in her analyses of life stories of action researchers that they are based on singularity and explanation. As MacLure wonders whether we could, and should, think of aborting that mission to explain, and what we might gain and lose by doing, she asks, 'Should we put our selves into the abyss?'. As an educational action researcher who accepts a responsibility for the educational development of his students, I find it difficult to understand how to fulfil these responsibilities, which include an expression that my students' lives are worth while, whilst at the same time putting myself into the abyss. This is not to say that a new rationale cannot emerge from MacLure's wonderings. I simply cannot as yet imagine what it might be.

Stronach (1996) says, that the task of deconstruction defines a post-modern approach. He says that it claims to be subversive, epistemologically anarchic, yet neither political conservative nor relativistically acquiescent. He says that such deconstruction ought centrally to concern educational research and theory. In an article on 'Fashioning Post-modernism', Stronach sets out to examine the policing of the so-called 'borders' of 'modernism' and 'post-modernism'. His ambition is to explore an approach to deconstruction which can model arguments against a wide range of educational topics including the categories of pupil or teacher or researcher identity. As Stronach acknowledges, his attempt fails, 'but perhaps interestingly enough to encourage further explorations in such directions'.

My worry about such explorations is that the language used by researchers adopting such an approach, does not appear to permit living pupils, teachers or researchers to speak on their own behalf. What happens in such an approach is that the researcher's categories of teacher, pupil and researcher appear to **exclude** the possibility of hearing how living teachers, pupils and researchers are creating their own living educational theories as they work at living their values more fully in their practice and as they work at asking, answering and researching questions such as, 'How do I help you to improve your learning?', or 'How do I live my values more fully in my practice?'.

If Stronach is correct that the task of deconstruction defines a post-modern approach we may indeed be limited to deconstruction. This, however, is not my understanding of my post-modern approach. I can engage in both deconstruction and construction, critique and creativity in researching my educative relationships with my students and in supporting their research into their educative relationships with their students.

Stronach (1997) points out that Derrida claims that deconstruction *is* education, a necessary unsettlement of what it is that we can (n)ever claim to understand about the nature of the individual and the social (Derrida, cited in Sohm, 1994) and so a virtuous irresolution. He asks, for an educational researcher or evaluator, how can that be a bad thing? Does not the impetus implicit in not-knowing, in not-ever-knowing, in knowing something of the not-ever of knowing not represent the greatest and most fruitful challenge that students of education could ever wish?

Deconstruction seeks out the singular instances of failure in method, methodology, and philosophy,

and Derrida's reading of Marx, Husserl, and others is a reading for such failures and what can be learnt from them. Such deconstruction does not seek to destroy but to identify and appreciate necessary failure. (Stronach, 1997, p. 35)

In Stronach's view:

For those who claim that deconstruction has no values, one riposte is simple: deconstruction opens, makes available for thinking, those things on which paradigms forever foreclose; the possibility of difference as a constituent of the same, the inattention to progress as a doubtful virtue, the impossibility of the Other. That is their contradiction: their utopianism and its mobilisation is the greatest impediment to the kinds of 'thinking-otherwise' that attend the deconstructive ambition and constitute its notions of responsibility and justice. As Derrida makes clear (if that is not a contradiction in terms), that is the value of deconstruction: it opens.

It may be that the value of deconstruction is that it opens, it may be that those who practice deconstruction are acting responsible and with justice. This isn't how I experienced MacLure's deconstructions of the narratives of becoming an action researcher (MacLure 1996). I agreed with her deconstruction of the narratives of becoming an action researcher in terms of 'singularity' and explanation. Given my fundamental category of 'explanation' I await with interest the results of *"What I am wondering at the moment is whether we could, and should, think of aborting that mission to explain..".* Where I felt she 'could/should' have gone further in her deconstruction of the explanations in the narratives of becoming an action research, on the ground of justice, was in relation to the explanations themselves.

"On the whole, in these life interviews, both interviewee and interviewer are engaged on a joint mission to explain. We act on a set of common assumptions: that life story will be linear, cumulative, coherent and development; that the past will help to explain the present (and not vice versa); that transitions are resolutions of boundary problems, and contradictions can be transcended; that the self is singular, discoverable through reflection, sits at the centre of our story and - though it may be pushed in different directions, or into somewhat different shapes, by external events - persists over time, and thus itself provides coherence to the narrative".

At least one of the researchers in her study was concerned with improving the quality of learning with his students and in understanding the values which constituted his educative relationships. Because of the omission of any deconstruction of the explanations of the professional learnings of the action researchers, in relation to the values they expressed with their students as they worked at improving the quality of learning, both the teachers' and students' 'voices' were lost in MacLure's analysis. I am claiming that educative relationships are important in the narratives of becoming educational action researchers in the Theses and Dissertations above and that at least one of MacLure's 'common assumptions' needs questioning. That is where she says that the past will help to explain the present (and not vice-versa). What I think a deconstruction of the living theory theses will show, is that the present practice of the action researchers is explained in terms of an evaluation of the past and in terms of an acceptance of a responsibility, and an intention to create something better in the future. Taking this responsibility for creating the future seems to be omitted from MacLure's post-modern deconstruction of the narratives of becoming an action researcher. Yet, it is included in the creation of living educational theories.

To conclude this section I would like to answer the last of Stonach's questions from my own point of view as an educational researcher who is researching his own university teaching:

Does not the impetus implicit in not-knowing, in not-ever-knowing, in knowing something of the not-ever of knowing not represent the greatest and most fruitful challenge that students of education could ever wish?

This is definitely not the most fruitful challenge that I wish for as a student of education. In my educational action research I am asking, answering and researching questions of the form, 'How can I

help you to improve your learning?'. What I am seeking to create and test are explanations (living theories) which can assist me in improving my educational influence with my students. Along with their desire to improve the quality of their educative relationships with their students, I think that the creation and testing of such theories also provided the most fruitful challenges for the educational researchers whose theses and dissertations are available from my web address.

Do new technologies imply the possibility of recasting the focus, tempo or interactivity of research approaches?

I owe my awareness of some of the implications of the new technologies for recasting the focus, tempo and interactivity of my research approaches, to Elliot Eisner and to my son, Jonathan Whitehead.

In 1993 I heard Elliot Eisner's Presidential Address to AERA on Forms of Understanding and the Future of Educational Research. Eisner (1993) discussed representation in educational research as a process of transforming the contents of consciousness into a public form so that they can be stabilised, inspected, edited, and shared with others. He discussed his belief that there is too much practical wisdom that tells us that the images created by literature, poetry, the visual arts, dance, and music give us insights that inform us in the special ways that only artistically rendered forms make possible. Eisner communicated with the image of a chimney at a Nazi death camp and the poetry of Elie Wiesel; Teddy Kennedy quoting from Ulysses in his acknowledgement of his lost candidacy; a young Chinese student in Tiananmen Square; Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream'; Rodney King beaten by police in Los Angeles. He stated his belief that film, video, the multiple displays made possible through computers, and poetically crafted narratives are waiting in the wings. In his latest paper on the promise and perils of alternative forms of data representation Eisner (1997) repeats his belief in the promise of the creation of multimedia displays for capturing the meanings new forms of data representation make possible and focuses his attention on the questions:

How do we display what we have learned?
What forms can we trust?
What modes are legitimate?
How shall we know?

In 1997 I asked my 17 year old son Jonathan to search the internet homepages for the best example he could find of the use of multi-media technology. I wanted to explore the use of this technology for the focus, tempo and interactivity of educational research but did not have the time to do the appropriate searches. Jonathan had previously set up my action research hompage in March 1996 on **http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw.** This has permitted some 5000 researchers to access the living theory theses and to examine the new living standards of judgement being developed by educational action researchers at Bath. Without his help I could not have developed my use of the new technologies to their present extent. I suspect that many teacher-researchers will recognise that their school-students have more expertise in the use of the new technologies than themselves and that this has implications for the way they are able to develop its potential in their classrooms and research.

Having the time and interest to explore the net Jonathan reported that the Pepsi-Cola Homepage on http://www.pepsi.com/ made good use of multi-media. On viewing this page I could see the potential for developing new forms of representation for educational research which could integrate the different images discussed by Eisner. Video-images were integrated with animation, with text, with voice. Such multi-media forms of representation offer the opportunity to focus on the communication of the meanings of spiritual, aesthetic and ethical values in educative relationships in a way which extends the range of communications through prose (Whitehead 1998). The meanings of these values are being explored in presentations on the action research homepage above. Unfortunately many Universities still restrict the forms of presentation of Ph.D. and M.Phil. theses to written text. What the multi-media presentations permit, especially through the production of CD-Roms, is the possibility of presentations which can integrate prose with visual images and hypertext forms of organisation. The old propositional constraints may be stifling these new opportunities for the development of new forms of understanding in educational research, especially in the communication

of the meanings of spiritual, aesthetic and ethical standards of judgement in claims to educational knowledge.

In relation to the tempo of educational research and its interactivity, the new technologies are transforming its conduct and presentation. Collaboration between researchers in different institutions and countries has been facilitated by e-mail and the ease with which correspondence can be integrated within a research paper has meant that more dialogical forms of presentation are being encouraged (Upitis & Russell 1996; Lomax, Parker, Evans and Whitehead 1998) The interactivity of researchers is also being encouraged through the internet. Examples of this can be seen in the materials of the Queen's University Homepage as initial teacher education students and masters students develop their studies through e-mail correspondence between themselves and their tutor Tom Russell. These correspondences can be accessed through the above world wide web address.

http://educ.queensu.ca/projects/action_research/queensar.htm

Do political changes in the ways in which we are governed open up or close down new possibilities for educational research?

In answering this question I will again speak from my own experience. I am thinking of: the influence of government policies on the funding of my time for research; the influence of the power relations in the implementation of my university's policies and practices on my educational inquiries; the control of what counts as educational knowledge in research committees and in educational journals on publications related to the field of my research, educational theory

i) Funding of Time for Research

In England, the Government's Higher Education Funding Council published a review, in February 1997, of research funding. They relegated Education to the lowest of three cost bands for quality-related research:

The effect of relegating Education to the lower band will be to reduce by 30 per cent - or £7 million - each year the core grant that will be available for educational research across the university sector for 1997/98. At the same time, a further £3.5 million - or 13 per cent - of the QR funds allocated to Education have been removed by HEFCE for a new initiative to support research projects designed to improve the quality of teaching. (Gipps, p. 2, 1997.)

Research in Education in my University has been given a 5B rating in the Research Assessment Exercise. These ratings determine This means that the difference in funding for individual members of staff in a Department of Education rated 2 and my own is some £18,000.

The political decisions on the ways money is allocated for research is a crucial influence on the time I can spend exploring new possibilities in my research. This money, and hence time, is denied to educational researchers in many institutions with low ratings. One alternative for a different funding mechanism has been presented by Bassey (1997) in his proposal for a cadre of professional researchers and a cadre of teacher researchers. In relation to his proposal he asks, *Have we the self-confidence to reconstruct the profession of educational research in response to the demands of our time?*

ii) University Power Relations, Creative Tension and Original Research

The greatest influence on the originality of my educational research has been the power relations associated with the implementation of my university's policies and practices. I have analysed these influences (Whitehead, 1993) in relation to the value of academic freedom in the development of my ideas on the creation of living educational theories in the context of the politics of educational knowledge.

Universities work within the law on academic freedom which states:

Academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have at their institutions. (Education Reform Act, 1988).

In November 1990 a meeting of the Board of Studies of the School of Education considered a letter I received from the Secretary and Registrar in June 1987 in which it was stated that my activities and writings were a challenge to the present and proper organisation of the University and not consistent with the duties that the University wished me to pursue in terms of teaching or research. The Board of Studies passed a motion that it was alarmed at evidence of a prima facie case of a breach of academic freedom with respect to the teaching and research activities of a member of staff. A working party of Senate was established to consider the matter. The overall conclusion of the Report of the Working Party on a Matter of Academic Freedom of May 1991 included the statement that:

The Working party did not find that, in any of Mr. Whitehead's seven instances, his academic freedom had actually been breached. This was however, because of Mr. Whitehead's persistence in the face of pressure; a less determined individual might well have been discouraged and therefore constrained.

The passion for academic freedom sustained my persistence and I integrated my learning from this pressure into my description and explanation for my own educational development (the creation of my own living theory) as I asked, answered and researched my question, 'How do I live my values more fully in my practice?'.

Another illustration of the way University power relations can operate is in relation to the judgements of examiners of research degrees. Whilst it may seem extraordinary that such judgements could be made without any form of public accountability, I am reminded that until 1991 in my own university the judgements of such examiners could not be questioned under any circumstances once they had been appointed. This regulation was changed in 1991 to permit questions to be raised on the grounds of bias, prejudice and inadequate assessment. The importance of establishing and protecting forums for public accountability is described below in relation to Editors and Research Committees.

iii) The Influences of Journal Editors and Research Committees

I want to consider the 'gatekeeping' role of Editors, Editorial Boards of Educational Journals and University Research Committees. Robert Donmoyer (1996), the Features Editor of Educational Researcher, one of the field's major scholarly journals, has analysed the pressures he feels under:

"Many articles are submitted; journal space is limited; criteria for assessing non-traditional scholarship are not well established; a cadre of critics is poised to speak out at the first sign of any departure from the standard operating procedures of the past." (p. 19).

Donmoyer goes on to give an example of one paper for which four reviewers between them, checked all five boxes, 'publish', 'publish with minor modifications', 'publish if revised', revise and resubmit' and 'reject'! In his analysis of the specific policies, procedures and decision rules to guide manuscript review, he explains that he anticipates that, at times, he will let disagreements that emerge during the review process spill over onto the journal's pages:

"I will, in other words, ask reviewers who disagree about the value of a particular research genre and the desirability of publishing a particular paper representative of that genre to go public by translating their reviews into mini-articles..... Reader's understanding of the published debates will certainly be enhanced if disputants can make reference to a concrete example of the orientation being debated and if that example is available for inspection." (pp. 23,24).

This seems to me to be an excellent procedure to adopt as it ensures that those who make academic judgements about the work of other researchers, and here I include Research Committees and

Directors of Studies for Research Students, can be held to public account. Without such openness it is possible for the bias, prejudice and inadequate assessment of Editors and Members of Research Committees to be used to close down the publishing and research opportunities for other researchers who explicitly embrace a commitment to create their own living educational theories. I see these theories as being constituted by the descriptions and explanations which individuals produce for their own educational development as they ask, answer and research questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'.

I am also thinking of the creation of living educational theories through both paradigmatic and post-paradigmatic possibilities. What I mean by this is that individuals who are creating their own living theories are post-paradigmatic in the sense that they are creating theories of their singularities in their social contexts. They are doing this often within contexts which support paradigmatic views of educational knowledge. Indeed, in the creation of one's own living educational theory it is often essential to draw on insights from such paradigmatic views as shown in the 6 Theses and Dissertations listed above. I wonder how many readers will recognise a story of their own educational development in which their creative phases of inquiry move into post-paradigmatic responses in the sense that no existing form of knowledge or theory can explain their present practice and educational development. I wonder how many readers will recognise a story of their own educational development in which their critical phases of inquiry draw on paradigmatic forms of theory to help them in deciding how to take their educational inquiry forward. Hence my title, *Creating living educational theories through paradigmatic and post-paradigmatic possibilities.*

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